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CHRISTIAN JOYFULNESS.

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.”—ROMANS xii. 12.

This may be called a maxim of life, or a very brief, condensed charter of happiness.

Joy is not a faculty; it is a quality of action, or a mood which may belong to any or to all of the faculties of the human soul. There is a double action, both of the physical organization and of the mental. The nerve that is in health, and is directed according to its own nature, responds pleasantly and joyfully. If it be in unhealth, or if it be directed contrary to its nature, it has the inverse power—that of the infliction of pain. Properly speaking, *pain* is a quality of the body; *suffering* is a term which designates pain of the mind.

In respect to the faculties of the soul, in one way their action inspires enjoyment. If they be violated, or if they be wrongly coupled, or apportioned, or dealt with, then they have the power of producing suffering.

Now, pain or suffering, whether it be of the body or of the mind, is not primary. It is not the end for which the body and the mind were created. It is cautionary, alternative, remedial. Pain bears to the body, and suffering bears to the mind, the same relation which medicine bears to the physical system. It is not food. It is that which is taken for the purpose of restoring health where it is impaired. And pain or suffering is either cautionary, indicating that we

are going wrong ; or remedial, to bring us back from wrong ways ; or educational, to inspire us to a higher development of life.

Joy is normal, or it is that which best becomes every faculty. It is the response which we have a right to seek, and which we have a right to expect, from every faculty of the human soul. In us, as imperfect beings, working upward, suffering is needful ; but the needfulness of it is a sign of our inferiority, of our limitation, of our defects ; and all forms of discipline, all self-denials, all cross-bearings, all cares and burdens and griefs, are signs of relative imperfection. And they are not to be despised. Nor are we to suppose that any man in this life—at any rate, until the later periods of it—will escape suffering and pain. It is one thing to regard pain and suffering as secondary, and instrumental to a higher purpose ; it is another thing to think that they are legitimate things to be sought as if they were good in themselves.

The ideal of perfectness is that of the mind acting in a mood so high that there is pleasure in all its action. Pleasure is the testimony of any faculty that it is acting in health and aright.

Now, is Christianity to be a pain or a pleasure ?—I mean ideal Christianity. Is religion to be a pæan, as of victory, or a requiem, as of defeat ? Is it set to the key of joy or to the key of sadness ? In reading the New Testament promiscuously, you will find that both things are continuously recognized—namely, the certainty of suffering, and of exaltation by suffering. You will find also that the New Testament is full and overflowing with the idea of joy and rejoicing. It becomes a question, therefore, of rank or gradation : Which is characteristic—joy or pain and suffering ? Suffering and pain are characteristic of an imperfect condition ; and all right enjoyments are characteristic of growing perfectness, or of a tendency toward perfection. Joy is a sign of health and virtue and holiness. Sorrow is a sign that we are taking medicine for the sake of health, but that we have not yet reached health.

Religion may therefore be a mere yoke, or it may be a

freedom from bondage. It may be, like a tune, set either to the major or to the minor key. It may be played slow, and therefore it may be dull ; or it may be rendered with a sparkling effect. The popular idea of religion is on the whole dolorous. It is very much a commercial transaction. We pay a certain amount of sorrow here for the sake of getting a dividend of joy hereafter. We are willing to give up a great many things which are good and desirable now for the sake of receiving an equivalent, or more than an equivalent, by and by. People who are exhorted to become Christians feel that they are called from liberty to circumscription. From the great world, with all its ambitions and freedoms and plenitudes and excitements, to a strait and narrow way of the church in which they are to be children of hours, and days, and methods, and ordinances, and deprivations. To be a Christian seems to most people as my condition used to seem when I was forbidden the street, and the fields, and the forest, and the whole round of nature, and was told that I must not go out of the door-yard. "You may play in the door-yard, but you must not go outside of it," it was said to me ; and I remember how wistfully I used to look down the street and see the boys playing in their freedom. I recollect how crazily I heard the drum and fife on military training days, and caught glimpses of the red coats as they marched to and fro down town. How these things used to stir my imagination ! and how it grieved me that I, a poor little boy, was shut up there in the door-yard, and made to behave myself !

There are many who think that being in the church is being in the Lord's door-yard, and not being allowed to go outside of the gate, and play with bad boys, nor to roam in the forests. I do not so regard it. To be a child of religion is to be like a bird taken out of its cage, let loose, and taught how to fly through all the air, and in the branches of every tree. It is to be a soul taken out of its prison-house, and given its liberty, and taught how to use it. There is no man so fit to live a religious life as he whose soul has derived freedom from his God.

Religion, as presented to the world, has gone through very many moods. There have been periods of the world in which

religion was presented in its ascetic form. It is so presented in some quarters at the present day. In other words, because pain has been constantly an instrument and part of discipline, men have deified it. Self-denial, mortification of the flesh, and the crucifixion of lusts—to these, undue emphasis has been given. Religion has been preached as though the more pain, the more virtue; as though the more self-denial, the more Christian development. The ascetic school has damaged Christianity exceedingly. There is still, in the popular notions of religion, and in much of the teaching which prevails on the subject of religion, this vitiating element of asceticism, which makes pain and suffering a part of it: not an education toward it, but an element belonging to its very substance.

Then, as a shade removed from that, after openly avowed asceticism had been measurably rejected, there came up a school that held what may be called the sober, solemn view; and religion has been preached as a grand sobriety, as a magnificent solemnity; and men have been taught to have such a sense of the dangers of the future, and of the awful responsibilities which are laid upon them in view of the risks of the future, that they have maintained to the utmost a sober and solemn aspect.

Now there are hours for solemnity, there are hours for sobriety; but to *characterize* religion by sobriety or solemnity is as if a man should characterize nature by comparing it with the night instead of the day; or as if a man should point out caves, gorges, and the shadows of trees, and say, "These are the emphatic things." Which is the most, the tree or the shadow that it casts?

If you will read the New Testament, you will find that it constantly recognizes the reality of suffering, and that it gives a deep undertone of solemnity to it; but after all, let one read the New Testament, and he will find joy the regnant quality. The word *joy*, if you take your Concordance and look for it, you will find to be as thick on its pages as the dandelions will be in a week in the meadows. The New Testament fairly sparkles with a conception of joyfulness.

Then there is a view of Christianity which continually

makes conscience the vital point. So men are self-studious. They are all the time intently watching and judging themselves. They are under an anxious fear lest they shall violate conscience. There is a tension of their mind which prevents much naturalness or freedom in their lives. It is comprehended in the general phrase, *a sense of responsibility*.

Now conscience is a foundation quality. There are a great many qualities which are indispensable, but which are not lovely when they are constantly projected into the foreground. Conscience is to a man's mind what bones are to his body. Bones are good things when they are well covered up; but they are very ghastly things when they are bare. Many Christians are like skeletons that show nothing but bones; and they talk much of conscience, and the awful duties and responsibilities which are imposed upon them. These are specimens of osteology which ought to be excluded from the sanctuary. Love is mightier than conscience, and joy is the result of both love and conscience. Conscience is the bones, love is the nerves, and joy is that which gives color to the whole.

There are false views of life growing out of these imperfect, erroneous presentations of Christianity. Look, for instance, at the tracts which are distributed on the subject of religion. I can understand how about one half of these tracts, if a man was only sick, in a morbid condition, discouraged, shut up in a corner, might lead him toward a religious life; but if a man is in good health, in the full performance of life's real duties, joyous and happy, I can hardly understand how he could have a greater damp thrown upon him than half the religious tracts which are thrown around among men. The best thing about them is that nobody reads them. Look at the pious books which are sent forth through communities. See how almost entirely they run upon the minor key. See how shadowy they are. See how little there is in them that cheers, inspires, and comforts the soul.

Now, religion gives to us the largest manhood possible. By it we are brought out of lower conditions, and out of all manner of circumscriptions. The aim of true Christianity

is to double and quadruple the power of a man, his versatility, his liberty, his scope of thought, his power of imagination, his resources of emotion, and in general the magnitude, the soundness, and the joyfulness of his life. It does not simply promise this hereafter ; its object is to produce it here ; and the work, being begun here, is to be carried on and up, and is to be consummated hereafter.

The New Testament never once propounds a theory of this or any kind ; but it never strikes a false or mistaken note in its practical directions. It is one of the noticeable things to those who look into this matter, that long before the science of the mind was studied, practical instruction was given as to the education and conduct of the human soul—instruction which reached further forward than our senses can understand. And when mental philosophy shall be evolved, by the help of physiology ; when we shall have sought out and searched to the bottom the whole theory of the mind, the New Testament will be better understood and appreciated than it is now ; for its practical directions which imply mental philosophy, but which have never been fully disclosed to the world, will then be made known in all their bearings.

If, then, joyfulness is the mood of life ; if suffering is but alternative and disciplinary ; and if joy, not in the form of ecstasy, but in its higher and more wholesome form, belongs to man's normal condition, then, in the first place, the question is not whether we shall not sometimes have pain, but whether, our souls coming into commerce with the soul of God, we shall not be able to overcome suffering by the power of true Christianity. It must be that we shall suffer. The Master was made perfect through suffering, as well as through joy. By the joys which were set before him he was enabled to rise through suffering into the amplitude of joy. I take it that in the earlier periods of his life, with some few exceptions, our Lord was supremely happy. He is called "The man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," in the prophecies ; but judging from his history as given in the New Testament, I take it that though there were instances in which he endured great suffering, yet, for the most part his life was one of transcendent enjoyment. I believe that

he was one of the most genial and enjoyable men that ever walked in old Jewry.

We are to have sorrow and suffering ; but we are not to wear them as garments. It is for us, if we be true Christians, to have such a constant tendency toward joyfulness that when sorrows come we shall be able to strike them through with the light and color of hope.

We are commanded to rejoice in hope. Well, rejoice in substance where you have it. Under such circumstances, however, you need no command ; but where the substance is wanting, then rejoice in hope. When the first touches of solemnity or sorrow come, men are inclined to brood over them ; but the true way is to lift one's self higher, and look through all the region round about, and think that though it is dark to-day, better times are coming ; and if you cannot tell what they are, nor when they will come, then rejoice in hope. "But," it is asked, "can you rejoice in the hope of anything which you know nothing about?" Yes. "But it may not come to pass." Very well, then you will have so much joy for nothing. Try it, and it will seem so good that you will want to try it again, and every time you try it it will seem better and better. "But suppose troubles come so thick and so sharp that you cannot rejoice in hope?" Then be patient. Do not magnify those troubles. Do not pick them. Do not make sores of pimples. A wholesome mind rises above sorrows ; and when they are gone it does not pluck them back, as if it were bound to be sorrowful, as if sorrow were a sacred thing, and as if you were better for being steeped in sorrow. You are better for having hopefulness and joyfulness.

It is not a question whether we shall have conscience and fear and reason ; for in all our life we are obliged to employ reason, and experience fear, and rest upon conscience ; but, in what atmosphere shall these qualities act ? I have said that joy is not a faculty, but a mood ; and I think it is the atmosphere in which conscience and fear and reason should act.

When I tell some persons that they should have great joyfulness, they say, "Ah ! you set aside conscience." No, I do not set it aside : I say to it, "You are apt to keep bad com-

pany." There is no faculty which is so likely to keep company with anger, with self-will, with combativeness, and with cruelty, as conscience. When a man wants to do things which are disallowed and mean and gross, he generally gets into his conscience. If a man is ugly and bitter and hard, you will in all probability find him intrenched behind his conscience. When Paul went to Damascus and persecuted God's people even unto death, he followed the dictates of his conscience.

Now, I do not decri the conscience ; but I insist upon it that this, and every other one of the noblest faculties, shall work in the spirit of joyfulness, and not in the spirit of fear ; that it shall work toward hope and light, and not toward despair and darkness. I hold that every man should come into the light of reason ; but reason should work in a cheerful, and not in an ascetic mood. All the normal faculties of men are to be brought into full play ; and the question is whether or not we shall have a reasonable religion—a religion which leads to righteousness—a religion which is cheerful and buoyant. "But suppose we are not of that turn of mind?" Then that is what conversion will mean in your case. You are to become of that turn of mind. A boy who is sent to school is not of the turn of mind to write ; but by instruction and training and practice he will come to it. Few men are at first of an arithmetical turn of mind ; but they will come to it by study and drill. And if a man is not naturally cheerful and courageous, he is to cultivate the element of hope. He is to mount up out of a low and torpid condition to the realm of true manhood, which is one of victorious joy.

It is not enough, then, that those who enter into the Christian life should simply avoid evil and seek good. To do these things is a prime constituent of a truly manly life ; but it is not sufficient. A man may avoid evil in a low and groveling way ; and a man may seek good in a poor and penurious way.

You will take notice, in the New Testament particularly (not in that exclusively : the same thing is also true, in a less degree, of the Old Testament ; for the New Testament was born out of the Old), that it is taught that it is not enough that men should follow right courses. There is

always an element of heroism enjoined and prescribed. We are not only to be holy, but we are to have the "beauty of holiness." The command is, "He that giveth let him do it with simplicity." A man may give in such a swelling way that everybody around about him shall know that he is giving, thus imitating the barnyard, where, one poor egg being laid, the hen that lays it cackles, and then all the barnyard and all the neighborhood join in the chorus. And yet there is a modest way of giving, in imitation of the bird that lays its little egg and makes no ado about it, but goes off flying and singing through the air. There is the barnyard vulgarity connected with the giving of many men, who cackle when they give, instead of obeying the injunction to give "with simplicity." The act of giving should have a moral beauty about it. It is not enough that a man should do the right thing; he must do it nobly, gracefully, resplendently. And it is not enough that the thing he does should be right and beautiful and noble and graceful and resplendent: it should be joyful. There is not an experience in any man's life that ought not, first or last, to sing. No experience of a man's life should be permitted to go free until it has sung its song.

Sometimes when the mother trains the child it is sulky and obstinate, and she is obliged to compel it to do the right thing; and it does it with a wry face and a crumpled mouth; and she says, "Now you must be good-natured, dear; I want to see you smile; I cannot let you go until you laugh;" and by and by its face clears up, its naughtiness disappears, and she says, "Now you may go;" but the thing was not settled until all the malign feelings were put down, and the benign feelings were made regnant.

It is not enough, then, to avoid evil, or even to do right; the evil must be avoided, and the right must be done, in such a way that it shall be beautiful to men and pleasing to God. "Beauty of holiness" means something.

The attempt to be joyful by direct meditation on truths is one of the mistakes which men fall into in undertaking to live Christian lives. That is to say, men know so little about the philosophy of joy that even in the instruction of the sanctuary where the right view is presented, it is often hin-

dered by its limitations and misconstructions and narrowness of teaching. There are very few men who have power to make themselves happy by meditation. Men say, "Christians ought to be joyful when they think of the victory of faith and the glory of the world to come, and when they think of this or that great spiritual truth." Yes, that is certainly so; but not one in a thousand has the generating power of brain by which to supply himself with thoughts of these things and keep them regnant in life. If a man were joyful only when he was thinking technically of religious truths, he would not be joyful much of the time. There are not many men whose minds, for any considerable portion of the time, are or can be devoted to religious meditation.

I need not tell you that many religious people are disagreeable. There are many people who are conscientious, and pure-minded, and right-hearted, and whom you have not the least doubt will, when they come to die, triumph and go to heaven; and yet they are not agreeable. Children do not like them—and that is a pretty good test; naturally simple people do not like them—and that is another pretty good test. They are rigid. There is a want of elasticity about them. They seem stiff. They are unattractive.

Now, if a man believes that in order to be joyful he must always be thinking about Jerusalem; that he must always be thinking about the doctrines of religion; that he must always be thinking about those great spiritual truths which lie beyond the realm of human experience, he makes a capital mistake. If a man thinks that what is required of him is simply to be joyful over the hymn-book, in the conference meeting, and in the church on Sunday, he is seriously mistaken. The hymn-book, the conference meeting, and the Sunday services are to yield joy to those who can extract joy from them; but for the most part the trees of life are so high that little hands cannot reach up and pluck down the blossoms or the fruit; and if no joy was called Christian joy except that which comes from meditation on high themes, the great mass of humble souls would go without joyfulness.

Now, you are to find Christian joy in your duties in the family, and in your duties outside of the family. You are to

find it in your every-day life at home and in society. You are to find it in your intercourse one with another. The great truths of God's love, of the redeeming power of the Holy Ghost, of the watchfulness of God over men, and of his helpfulness toward them, are to have such an effect on your mind that when you enter upon your daily tasks you shall have power of hope in you so that you can extract joy from common things. There is where you must get your joy—in nature ; in society ; in social intercourse ; in all things. Paul said he rejoiced even in infirmities.

Nineteen-twentieths of our life must be spent in thoughts of physical things, and not of spiritual subjects. A man who is at work in a cabinet shop will be thinking about how he shall provide for his family as well as about the labor which he is performing. A man who is in business will be thinking perpetually how he shall carry that business on successfully. A merchant has a multitude of things to occupy his attention. And how shall these men think of hymns and utter prayers while the influences of outward affairs are pressing in upon them from every side ? Now and then there will be interjectional prayers uttered, and there will be snatches of hymns sung ; but during nineteen-twentieths of the time these men must be occupied in thoughts of their avocations ; and if there were no way to have joyfulness in the necessary occupations of men, we should be slenderly equipped, in the providence of God, for the experience of that joy whose tendency is to make life beautiful.

Things have been going very badly with a man. It has been hard work for him to get up in the morning and resume the toils of the day. He has been running behind in every part of his work, and it has become drudgery to him. Care is beginning to plow deep furrows on his face. But by and by his old partner, who has been gone so long, and who has been supposed to be dead, comes home, and brings tidings of ample capital, and greets him over night, and says to him, " Well, it is all right now. Everything is arranged ; our affairs will be prosperous again. I am sorry to see you in such a drag ; but things will work smoothly after this." The next morning the man does the same things that he did before, but he does

them in a different mood. Before, he was discouraged and all collapsed ; but now that his partner has said to him, " I am behind you with sufficient means," see how the man goes out courageous and hopeful. One day he is depressed by sadness and fear, and the next day he is buoyed up by hope and courage ; and when he has got through his day's work he goes home at night cheerful, having been cheerful all day long. The moment the good news was brought to him a change came over him such that he extracted joy from all his duties and all his surroundings.

Have you never gone to your business bearing the thought of some sick one at home ? How at every interval, under such circumstances, between the transactions of the day gloomy thoughts and fears shoot up into your mind ! How the day wears ! By-and-by a joyful reverse takes place, and health comes back ; and then, in the intervals there shoot up into your mind feelings of gladness and joy. With many men, yesterday it was all darkness, and to-day it is all light.

Have you never come into an hour of great love ? Have you never come home in vacation with a realization of what you had in father and mother, brother and sister, and friends ? Do you not remember how you could hardly sleep the night before you started for your father's house ? Do you not remember how you wearied yourself with ecstacy and expectation on the coach during the early part of your journey homeward, and how as you came near your destination your heart became heavy and sad, having used yourself up, and, as it were, petrified your feelings by excess of excitement ; but how, after you became rested, for days and days home and friends seemed blessed to you ?

Now, the function of divine truth is to fill the mind with blessed associations of God ; with a realization of the divine government ; with a sense of God's presence and love ; with such a perception of the power of the Holy Ghost in the soul that there shall be victory in business and care and labor.

It is not trouble in this life that makes us unhappy : it is the low tone which we are in when we receive trouble. We receive it on such relaxed minds and with so little vitality and courage, that it harasses us when it ought not to.

If a man's skin is abraded in any part, he is sensitive to the finest dust when it falls upon that part; but if his skin is unbroken and healthy, not only dust but gravel may fall on it and he scarcely feel it; and thorns will almost produce no impression upon it. Many persons carry minds with such an excoriated skin, so to speak, with so little manhood, so devoid of hope and faith, so wanting in a realization of the life to come, of the grandeur of liberty in God and of sympathy in Christ Jesus, that when troubles come upon them they have no resource—nowhere to fly.

There are little birds that live in coarse and low-growing shrubs; and they are subject to the power of the serpent, and to destruction by the hunter; but there are other birds who have the liberty of the whole air, and fly to the summits of the tallest trees, and higher even, so that no fowler's arrow can reach them, and no snare can entangle them, and no power on earth can harm them. So there are men who live near the earth where they are subject to a thousand influences which tend to degrade and destroy them; and there are other men who live above this world, having listened to the call of God who loved them when they were dead in sin as the mother loves the child; and they dwell in an atmosphere where no trouble can reach to harm them. When a man is under the inspiration of these truths and a realization of large manhood in Christ Jesus, he has the power to escape from trouble, by the power of patience in trouble. Yes, there is such a thing as a man's being "patient in tribulation." The same thing means to-day an ounce, and to-morrow a ton, according to the mood which a man is in. The dynamics of trouble is but little understood.

A man goes over to New York. His great affairs are all toppling down. Whoever speaks to him almost makes him cry. He is under the pressure of bankruptcy. Right before him he sees losses, ruin and poverty. A thousand imaginary wants stare him in the face. But reverse this state of things. Let men put into his possession all that he needs, for as long as he needs it. Now this same man, when he goes to his business, sees things very differently. That which annoyed him yesterday does not annoy him to-day. That which yes-

terday was almost unbearable to him he can now bear with the utmost composure. That which struck him yesterday strikes a very different man to-day—or the same man in a different mood. A man who is happy can bear anything in creation. Courage, hope and joy—these lift a man up with scarcely less than an omnipotent power. Your faith and your love are factors of your character and life.

A man who brings to his business a sweet and singing soul, a man who brings to the affairs of life an enlightened and ransomed spirit, a man who brings to his avocation true spiritual manhood, will find joy in everything. Everything he looks upon he will turn, in one way or another, to such uses that it will work exhilaration.

Now it is a good thing for a man to learn how to be happy in prayer-meetings, and on Sunday in church ; but I think that rational happiness is one of the most wholesome things in the world. That which men are dying for is rational happiness. There are those who are not half the men that they ought to be, because they are not impleted with that aerated blood which gives the impulse and the power to overcome circumstances, and turn even adversity to a good account. What Christianity needs is men who are happy, not alone when they go to the concert-room, or the lecture-room, or the church, but at all times—men who have a capital of happiness which they can carry out into all the spheres of life, so as to be victorious over their cares and trials, and the ten thousand influences which surround them.

Look a little at this matter. We have to mix and deal with men more or less. Some of them are ugly ; others are stingy ; others are pompous and disagreeable ; others are imperious and despotic ; others are plausible, smooth and deceitful ; others are spiteful and nagging ; others are like flies, disgusting in their familiarity ; others are like wasps that never touch but to sting ; others go bumping and thumping through the world like summer beetles in a room at night ; and the tendency of selfishness is to sort out these men and keep each class away from every other ; but the true Christ-like spirit is so large that it tends to incline a man to meet all these men, and have commerce with them, and manifest a

disposition of kindness toward them. Yea, even if they assail you, and follow you up with determined evil, and fill your road with impediments, and beat you down, and persecute you, you are to have from Christ such a spirit of meekness and gentleness and hope and joy and love that they shall not disturb your happiness.

In the tower of the old cathedral at Antwerp, there is a chime of thirty bells, some of which are not larger than a tumbler, and which at every hour ring out exquisite music, some magnificent chant, and every quarter of an hour make a lead out toward it, by way of getting ready. But suppose when the wind blew upon that tower those bells would not play? Suppose they would not play when the storm raged above it? Suppose they would not play during biting frosts or intense heat? But there they swing, and always at the appointed time they thrill the air with music, through summer and winter, with a power in themselves which is dependent neither on calms nor storms, neither on heat nor cold; and though battle itself should rend the air with tumult, at the regular periods out would gush wondrous melodies, filling all the upper region; and it would be just the same though not a single man was near to listen.

And so ought men in the hubbub of life to carry about them a joyfulness which, at every hour and at every quarter hour should sound out, no matter what might be going on above them or below them or around them. There ought to be joy in a man which should at all times make him independent of his circumstances.

There are some things which are necessary, but which are not agreeable. I suppose that if I were to say to my chisel, "Do you like to be put on the hone?" It would say, "No; it is a great trial to me that I am ever honed." And I suppose if I should say to my saw, "Do you like to be filed?" It would say, "No; I wish that I might never be filed again; I hate the sound, and I don't enjoy the feeling." And yet, to be of use, a chisel needs to be honed, and a saw needs to be filed. And the cares and troubles of life are the emery or strop by which men are sharpened and brought to a cutting edge. The trials which men are

called to undergo are the means by which they are educated. But they take their education hard. They do not understand it. They are ignorant of the opportunities which are offered them for development and training in the school of God. What they need is that their experiences should be struck through with the light of Christian faith and joy.

I like to hear persons sing. I think I would pay several dollars extra a month to a servant girl who would sing as she worked. A captain on shipboard is sometimes willing to pay for a man that fiddles that he may go along and entertain the crew with music. But what if they could all fiddle? How much more they would enjoy it! It is a good thing to have a person in the house who knows how to sing; but why should not everybody in the house sing?

Why are you snubbed by care—you who are the emblem of power in the universe; you who represent nerve-power, brain-power, soul-power, God-power? Why is it that you are carried away by little attritions? Why is it that you knuckle down to things that worry you, and talk about your burdens and responsibilities? It is a shame. It is a denial of religion. It is bearing false witness against Christ. Every true Christian should live in the midst of necessary cares and troubles with a joyful spirit, so that those who look shall wonder, and ask, "Where did you get the power to do it?"

A man goes into a shop, and does not drink, nor swear, nor ride on Sunday, nor squander his money. He is a sober, steady man. He is a Christian. And his fellow workmen, observing his life, say, "That may suit him, but it would not agree with my temperament."

On the other hand, let a man become a Christian, and go into a shop, and not only avoid evil and follow good, in a general way, but be cheerful under all circumstances: let him be genial though he is balked of his wages; let him be kind to those who attempt to wrong him; let him do good to those who persecute him, and everybody will like him better than they did before he became a Christian. A man is sweet-tempered when everybody else is soured in temper: when everybody else is tired, and gloomy, and depressed, he is full of song and cheerfulness and elasticity;

and men say to him, "You seem to enjoy life all the time," "Yes," he says, "enjoying life is what I mean by being a Christian." "Well," they say, "If I could get into his state of mind, I would like to be a Christian. I always supposed that if I became a Christian I should *have to* go to church, and quit tobacco, and knock off swearing." No, not a bit of it; for if after becoming a Christian, you want to swear, you can. I say to every man who has that idea of what it is to be a Christian, "When you love the Lord with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, then you may swear if you want to.

I go to Nootka Sound, and take a blubber-eating boy, and propose to bring him home and civilize him. He says, "I don't want to be civilized. If I go with you, you won't let me eat rotten blubber." I say, "Certainly I will; go to New York and live with me four or five years, and learn to eat such food as civilized people do; and if at the end of that time you want to eat rotten blubber you may." No man wants to eat rotten blubber after he is civilized, and no man wants to swear after he has become a Christian.

Suppose I should say to John Zundel, "You may have discords if you want them." That would be safe, for he never wants them, his ear having been trained to harmony. And I would say to men, "Right is inherently sweeter and better than wrong;" and when a man once comes into such a condition of life that wrong hurts him, and when he comes to have such a sense of right that he prefers it, there can be no law to him. He is a law to himself. He has that in him which is his guide.

Now, if we had fewer of the mechanical processes of religion, fewer of its technical doctrines, and more of the love and sweetness and light and joy and undying inspiration which belongs to Christianity, what a proclamation we should be to everybody! One true Christian in a house is like an organ in that house. It takes only one Ponce de Leon rose to fill a room with fragrance. If there is one in the parlor, the instant I come in I know that it is there, though I do not see it. And what if I had a whole garden full of them?

It is a shame that Christianity has so little power among

men. It is a shame that the influence of Christian men in the world is so feeble. The reflected light of Christianity in a man who is a Christian ought to be so beautiful to the imagination, to the reason, to all the higher faculties, as to lift men out of vulgarisms and animalisms into spirituality. A man who is a Christian ought to stand in such contrast with men who are not Christians that every one who beholds him shall not only wish to be like him, but shall glorify God on his account. And what a criticism this is on popular Christianity! It gives light also on the subject of living high or low Christian lives. The older I grow, the less I am disposed to put men under yokes and burdens, the less important do I regard it that men should become nominal and technical Christian people, and the more essential do I feel it to be that they should become inwardly Christians. And in receiving into the church so large a number as we have on the present occasion, I have felt moved to celebrate this day of their public espousal of their connection with God by presenting Christianity in its aspects of hope and liberty and elasticity and sweetness and gladness. I do not want any more poor, maimed Christians. Well, I will take them in if they were poor and maimed before, in order that their condition may be made better—in order that the halt may leap, and that the leper may be cleansed; but I am not willing that they should come into this church to see less than they saw before; to be more restricted than they were before. I am not willing that they should come in feeling, “I must do such and such things so that I may have my reward in the life to come.” I am not willing that they should come in saying, “I wonder how much freedom I can have; I wonder how far I can go in the enjoyments of worldly things; I wonder whether I can go to the opera, whether I can dance, and whether I can play cards at home. Of course, I do not want to violate Christian rules; but I would like to know how far I can safely go in these directions. I am going to take just as much secular enjoyment as I can and not lose my soul.” I do not want any such Christians.

All things are yours, if you only are Christ's. “Henceforth I call you not servants,” saith the master to his

disciples, "but friends; for the servant knoweth not what the master doeth." The servant is not admitted to intimacy and to counsel; but you, if you are Christ's and are lifted above the lower environments of this world into the realm of love and purity and holiness, become judges, severally, of what is right and wrong in your sphere. I long to see men brought into the church more noble, more manly, larger, carrying themselves in trouble and in trials with a heroism and courage which shall give others to know that they are converted. I long to see men come into the church in order that they may blossom outside of the church. I would have men come into the church that they may become more fragrant, freer and more joyful. In Christian life, under such circumstances, there is increase of joy. Joy that becomes peace is the highest joy in the world. Turbulent joys are the lowest forms of joy, always. Ecstasy is not as good as peacefulness. As men grow riper and richer in their spiritual nature they tend more and more to come into "that peace which passeth all understanding"—the peace of God which is an equalization of joy.

If you lift up a peak on a plain, it stands noticeable in its solitariness; but if you lift up another by the side of it, and another by the side of that, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, then the surface of these various peaks itself becomes a plain. A dozen hills put together make a level surface. And one joy, when it lifts itself up alone, stands solitary; but if you put a second, a third, a fourth, and a fifth along with it, by-and-by you have a level plain of peace. Men say that it lacks excitement; but I say that it is the highest form of excitement. Enjoyment in its most blessed form is that perfect tranquility which is deep as the ocean, peaceful as the ocean in a calm, and grand as the ocean in a storm. Christian life should be sweet and peaceful, founded in love and in righteousness, and flying by hope and faith all around in the atmosphere of joy.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice."

After the blessing is pronounced we shall sit together and partake of the emblems of the broken body of Christ,

and of his blood shed. To me this is a very joyful service ; because, although here is defeat, we also have the rebound of victory. I invite every one in this congregation who has spiritual fitness to join with us. I do not limit the invitation of the Lord's table by any ecclesiastical or theological lines. I put it on the ground of human need. Whoever needs the Lord Jesus Christ to comfort him, to inspire him, and is willing to accept him in his inward thought, and feeling—him I invite to participate in these emblems of Christ's sacrifice for us.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

OUR heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast permitted us to live and behold these blessed scenes; that thou hast created such joy within the sanctuary; making so many hearts glad. We thank thee that thou hast set the day in so much brightness without; that thou hast commanded the sun and the season, and that all things are springing up and breaking forth into life, and beginning to grow.

Now, O Lord, thou hast brought spring hither also; and in thy garden thou art causing many and many a one to begin to show forth the power of the new life. We pray that thou wilt accept the wishes and purposes of thy dear children who have this morning been united to us; and grant that yet more significantly they may be united to thee; that the channel of intercourse between their souls and thy soul may be open and large; that continually thy Spirit may descend upon them, and inspire in them the noblest thoughts and motives; and that they may be cleansed from the imperfections of the world and the flesh, and be imbued with everything which partakes of the divine influence. We pray that thou wilt fill them with all joy, not only in believing, but in living. May they become the children of light and of joy; and may they be known everywhere by their righteousness. If troubles shall come upon them, may they have that spirit of illumination from above which shall enable them to pierce through trouble with the bright light of faith and hope. If thou shalt bring bereavements upon them, may thy grace be sufficient for them. Thou that hast in every age upheld thy servants in the dungeon, in the flame, in the wilderness, living or dying—thou canst still animate thy servants, and give them strength for their day. Grant that these dear souls now gathered into communion with us, through us may be strengthened for the emergencies of their lives, that they may be happier in themselves, and that they may better bring the voice of gladness and of cheer into the dwellings where they are, and show forth in the gentleness, and meekness, and humility, and love which they shall bear to all who are around them, the true working of the divine Spirit in them. We beseech of thee that they may not count themselves unworthy of suffering, since thou wert crowned with thorns—thou that dost now wear the stars for thy diadem. May they not shrink from enduring pain in such measure as is needful either to cleanse them, or to enable them to bear witness and testimony for Christ. May they, from day to day, find their hearts more and more fed with hope and gladness. May thy Word, an ever open and exhaustless treasure, be their delight, wherein they may find the way of life pointed out. May they find in it those communications of God which are needed by their souls. And so may they be made rich.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy servants who have looked upon this ingathering may rejoice and have faith for the future. Behold, this is the result of seed sown in tears. Behold, here is the fruit of years of watching and care. We rejoice that there are some who see their

* Immediately following the reception of members into the church.

children, that there are some who see those long dearer to them than their own selves, now recalled from wandering ways to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

We rejoice, O Lord, that there are many who look down from the heavenly sphere, and whose hearts are made glad by sights like these on earth. We rejoice in the sense that those who have gone out from among us into glory are yet with us in sympathy. We congratulate those who have lived and labored for the elevation of this people—those who have beheld in the consecration of these souls the fruit of their prayers, and watching, and fidelity. And we beseech of thee that none may be discouraged. In these bright testimonies of the power of truth and God's faithfulness, may those who are discouraged be reassured. May those who have backslidden and are wandering, return to the fold of Christ. And may this house be filled with gladness to-day.

We cannot, O Lord, thank thee enough for thine illumining Spirit and grace by which thou hast comforted the hearts of thy people. How much occasion have we all to bear witness to the goodness of God and the sustaining grace of God; and together, as a church and congregation, we make mention of thy goodness, and rejoice in thee, and praise thy holy name.

And now, we pray that thou wilt make this a day of delight to every one of us. We rejoice in our liberty. We rejoice in the liberty of the spirit which makes us free, and which gives us all things. The range of the universe is ours. Thou wilt yet give us power by which to rise and fly. We shall cast off these bodies, this weight, the infirmities of the flesh, and shall go home to the general assembly of the first born in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. May we take hold, to-day, somewhat of the largeness of the life which is coming to us, and learn less and less to look with care and anxiety upon the fleeting things of the present life.

Grant, we pray thee, that in our homes, in our avocations, in our walking by the way, wherever we may be, we may evermore rejoice in the Lord, so that men beholding our brightness and gladness shall seek to come into the same blessed experience.

And now, we pray that thou wilt grant to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, grace, mercy and peace. Grant to all thy churches plenitude of power and wisdom by which thy servants may speak the truth efficaciously. May they rejoice in their labor; and though they may sow their seed in tears, may they speedily come again, their bosoms filled with sheaves.

We pray for the spread of knowledge throughout our land, and for the establishment of this great people, not in outward strength, but in the strength of God. And may all thy promises which respect the islands of the sea and the dark continents of the earth, and the whole realm of the world, be speedily fulfilled, and the glory of the Lord rest upon all mankind.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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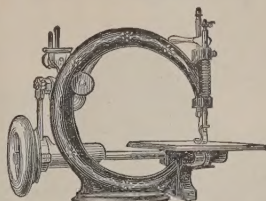
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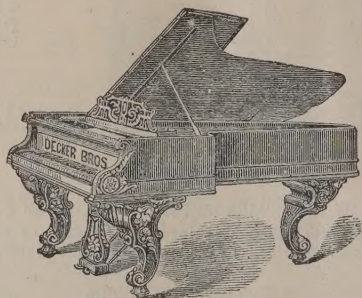
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